

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00076 01 OF 02 161016Z

12

ACTION AF-06

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01 EB-07 /081 W

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P R 160715Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1153

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0076

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ZA, RH, UK

SUBJECT: JEREMY THORPE MEETS RHODESIAN LEADERS

1. SUMMARY: UK LIBERAL PARTY LEADER THORPE MADE ONE-DAY SALISBURY VISIT JAN 14 TO MEET SMITH AND ANC LEADERS. THORPE TOLD AMBASSADOR HE FOUND ANC DIVIDED AND UNABLE ENFORCE CEASE FIRE UNTIL CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE DATE SET; SMITH UNCHANGED, EVASIVE, INFLEXIBLE, UNWILLING TO CONCEDE PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY RULE, AND CAPABLE OF INTERMINABLE FOOT-DRAGGING UNLESS PRESSURE ON HIM MAINTAINED. MUTUAL DISTRUST BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE RHODESIANS STRONG. SAID VORSTER PRESSURE ON SMITH AND KAUNDA-KHAMA-NYERERE PRESSURE ON ANC FUNDAMENTAL TO PRESERVATION OF MOMENTUM TOWARD SETTLEMENT. THORPE INTENDS ADVISE FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN TO PUSH AHEAD WITH PREPARATIONS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY

2. I HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH
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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00076 01 OF 02 161016Z

BRITISH LIBERAL PARTY LEADER JEREMY THORPE JUST

BEFORE HE DEPARTED LUSAKA FOR LONDON REGARDING HIS QUICK SIDE TRIP TO RHODESIA TO MEET ANC LEADERS AND IAN SMITH AFTER VISIT TO ZAMBIA AND MEETINGS HERE WITH PRESIDENT KAUNDA, FONMIN MWAANGA, MARK CHONA AND OTHER GRZ LEADERS DURING A FACT-FINDING VISIT TO ZAMBIA.

3. THORPE ARRANGED FOR HIS VISIT TO RHODESIA BY PHONE CALL TO SIR ROY WELENSKY IN SALISBURY. HE CHARTERED AIRCRAFT FROM LUSAKA AND MADE ROUND TRIP ON JAN 14, RETURNING TO LUSAKA IN TIME FOR FONMIN MWAANGA'S RECEPTION FOR SIR ROY WELENSKY WHO IS NOW VISITING LUSAKA AS GUEST OF GRZ FOR OPENING OF THIS YEAR'S SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (SEPTTEL). THORPE REGARDS WELENSKY AS WITHOUT POLITICAL FUTURE IN RHODESIA BECAUSE HE IS SO DISTRUSTED BY EUROPEANS THERE.

4. THORPE BECAME AS MUCH CENTER OF AN ATTRACTION AT RECEPTION AS WELENSKY AND AS A RESULT WITHDREW WITH REPORTERS TO AN ANTE-ROOM FOR OFF-CUFF PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE ACKNOWLEDGED HIS RHODESIAN VISIT AND MEETINGS WITH IAN SMITH AND "REPRESENTATIVES OF THREE STRANDS OF ANC" (WHOM HE DID NOT IDENTIFY TO THE PRESS). EXPRESSING HIS LONG-STANDING CONCERN ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICAN SITUATION AND WARNING OF DANGERS OF ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE, HE TOLD REPORTERS "RHODESIA IS THE GREAT PRIORITY OF AFRICA." HE WAS MUCH BETTER INFORMED AS RESULT OF SALISBURY VISIT. "THERE IS ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF WORK YET TO BE DONE."

5. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH ME THORPE WENT INTO SOME DETAIL ON HIS MEETINGS WITH REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE, DR. GORDON CHAVUNDUKA, AND EDISON SITHOLE; HIS TALK WITH SMITH; PROBLEMS OF CEASE FIRE; CALLING OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE; AND RHODESIAN POLITICS AND ECONOMY. MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

6. MEETING WITH ANC LEADERS. DIVISIONS WITHIN ANC ARE QUITE APPARENT BETWEEN THOSE WHO HAD REMAINED IN DETENTION AND HAD SUFFERED PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY AS A
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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 00076 01 OF 02 161016Z

RESULT (REFERENCE TO REVEREND SITHOLE'S CURRENT FIT OF EPILEPSY WHICH IS UNDERMINING HIS ROLE) AND THOSE WHO HAD LED THE GUERRILLA FIGHT FROM OUTSIDE (REFERENCE TO ZANU'S RADICAL CHITEPO WHOSE INSISTENCE ON VIOLENCE COULD BE TROUBLESOME).

7. ANC LEADERS REFUSE TO TAKE EITHER A BLOCKING THIRD IN PRESENT OR NEW PARLIAMENT OR PARITY ON A

50/50 REPRESENTATIVE BASIS. THEY WANT "ONE MAN,
ONE VOTE." SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH, ANC LEADERS SAID
IN ANY TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF 18 MONTHS TO TWO
YEARS DURATION THEY WOULD EVEN CONSIDER SMITH
AS PM BECAUSE THEY FELT HE OFFERED BEST GUARANTEE
OF PUBLIC SECURITY AND LAW AND ORDER.

8. THORPE ADVISED ANC LEADERS TO OBTAIN BEST
POSSIBLE LEGAL COUNSELORS ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS,
SUGGESTING SOME AFRICANS FROM NIGERIA AND GHANA.

9. CEASEFIRE. ANC LEADERS ADMITTED THEY COULD NOT RPT
NOT DELIVER ON CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT UNLESS DATE SET FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. ANC LEADERS CONFIDENT OF
MAKING CEASE FIRE WORK IF EIGHT CONDITIONS TO LUSAKA
AGREEMENT HONORED (CAPE TOWN 36). THORPE
PERSONALLY FEELS IF MOMENTUM TOWARD CONSTITUTIONAL
CONFERENCE LOST, DANGER OF VIOLENCE WILL BE HEIGHTENED.
TO GET ANC LEADERS TALKING WITH SMITH AND HIS
COLLEAGUES (THORPE DELIBERATELY AVOIDED SPEAKING OF
"SMITH GOVERNMENT"), THORPE SUGGESTED FORMATION
OF CEASEFIRE ENFORCEMENT TEAM OF TWO ANC AND TWO
SMITH REPS. ANC LEADERS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE BUT
DOUBTED IT WOULD WORK; VIOLATIONS WOULD SIMPLY BE
DENIED. THORPE SUGGESTED ADMIXTURE OF TWO
CANADIANS OR SCANDINAVIANS.

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00076 02 OF 02 161025Z

15

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1154

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 0076

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

10. IN LATE EVENING CONVERSATION JAN 14 WHICH RAN UNTIL 2:00 A.M. THORPE BRIEFED FONMIN MWAANGA AND KAUNDA ADVISOR CHONA ON HIS RHODESIAN TRIP. CHONA CONFIRMED A REPORT FROM PRETORIA THAT SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS TRYING TO OBSERVE THE CEASEFIRE HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF CROSS FIRE AND PAID WITH THEIR LIVES.

11. MEETING WITH SMITH. THORPE FOUND SMITH UNCHANGED, UNCOMPROMISING, EVASIVE AND VERY MUCH THE SAME OBDURATE AND INFLEXIBLE MAN. ALTHOUGH CONSCIOUS THAT HIS ELECTORATE WANTS A CEASE FIRE, SMITH UNWILLING TO TAKE ANY REALLY SERIOUS RISKS OR INITIATIVES TO BRING IT ABOUT. SMITH REAFFIRMED HIS STATEMENT OPPOSING MAJORITY RULE "IN HIS LIFETIME" AND ADVOCATING QUALIFIED FRANCHISE. THORPE THOUGHT SMITH QUITE CAPABLE OF HEDGING ALL ALONG THE WAY UNLESS PRESSURE ON HIM IS MAINTAINED BY SAG PM VORSTER.

12. SITE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. SMITH IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00076 02 OF 02 161025Z

UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO ANY SITE OTHER THAN SALISBURY BECAUSE HE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE AWAY FROM RHODESIA FOR THE EXTENDED PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS WHICH PROBABLY WOULD BE NEEDED TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. ANC LEADERS ARE AGREEABLE TO NAIROBI OR LAGOS AS SUGGESTED BY OAU LEADERS. THORPE PERSONALLY PREFERS LONDON FOR VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS.

13. RHODESIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION. TIMOTHY GIBBS, CHAIRMAN OF OPPOSITION RHODESIAN PARTY, TOLD THORPE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY OF THE UNSETTLED RHODESIAN SITUATION BECOMING TROUBLESOME. CIVILIANS WERE CONTINUALLY BEING PULLED AWAY FROM THEIR JOBS AND PROFESSIONS FOR THREE WEEKS EVERY EIGHT MONTHS ON POLICE DUTY AND FOR ONE MONTH IN NINE FOR ARMY SERVICE. IF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE WERE TO WITHDRAW FROM RHODESIA, THE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY WOULD WORK AN EVEN GREATER HARDSHIP AS CIVILIANS WOULD THEN BE CALLED UP FOR ONE MONTH IN EVERY FOUR AND A HALF MONTHS.

14. ANOTHER DISQUIETING FACTOR IS REPORTS THAT MANY POLITICIANS AND EVEN CABINET MINISTERS, SMITH INCLUDED,

ARE BUYING UP DIAMONDS AS A POLITICAL HEADGE AND SENDING THEM TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR SAFEKEEPING. ONE MIDDLEMAN HAS ALREADY BEEN ARRESTED AND PUT IN MAXIMUM SECURITY, GIBBS TOLD THORPE.

15. OUTLOOK. I ASKED THORPE IF PRESSURE FROM SAG PM VORSTER ON SMITH WAS KEY ELEMENT IN KEEPING UP MOMENTUM TOWARD A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED IT FUNDAMENTAL, BUT HE ALSO FELT PRESIDENTS KAUNDA, NYERERE AND SERETSE KHAMA SHOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP PRESSURE ON ANC LEADERS TO MAKE THE CEASEFIRE WORK. THORPE SAID HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE CONFIRMED WHAT CALLAGHAN HAD IMPLIED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON JAN 14 ABOUT MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE AMONG THE MAJOR RHODESIAN ELEMENTS TO A SETTLEMENT BEING FRAGILE AND IN DANGER OF ERODING. HE SAID ON HIS RETURN TO LONDON HE WOULD URGE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN TO PUSH AHEAD IN PREPARATIONS FOR A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LUSAKA 00076 02 OF 02 161025Z

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE.

16 THORPE ADMITTED TO ME BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY HAD TRIED TO DISCOURAGE HIM FROM GOING TO RHODESIA ON GROUNDS THAT UK COMMUNICATIONS WITH RHODESIANS WERE SATISFACTORY. THORPE SAID HE FOUND JUST THE OPPOSITE TRUE WHEN HE MET WITH ANC LEADERS AND SMITH. HE THOUGHT IT VITAL THAT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE TWO MAJOR RHODESIAN ELEMENTS BE IMPROVED AND HE FELT HE COULD MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS EFFORT.

17. KEN MEW OF MULTIRACIAL CENTER IN SALISBURY TOLD THORPE HIS INSTITUTION HAD BEEN ACTIVE IN BRINGING AVERAGE OF 5,000 WHITES AND BLACKS TOGETHER ANNUALLY IN CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO FOUNDER FOR LACK OF FUNDS. SAID 10,000 POUNDS STERLING URGENTLY NEEDED. THORPE NOTED THAT FORD FOUNDATION SUPPORT HAD DRIED UP. SAID HE WOULD URGE HARRY OPPENHEIMER OF ANGLO-AMERICAN TO CONSIDER CONTRIBUTION.

18. COMMENT: THORPE'S TRIP INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA SEEMS TO HAVE DISPELLED SOME OF THE BLUE AIR AGAINST BRITAIN GENERATED AMONG ZAMBIANS BECAUSE THEY FEEL CALLAGHAN APPROACHED RHODESIAN ISSUE TOO SLOWLY AND TOO CAUTIOUSLY. ZAMBIANS HOPEFUL CALLAGHAN WILL HEAR OUT THORPE WHO NOW HAS MORE DIRECT AND USEFUL EXPERIENCE WITH MAIN PROTAGONISTS. AS FOR THORPE, HE HAS

UNDOUBTEDLY SCORED A POLITICAL COUP BY GOING WHERE
CALLAGHAN FEARED TO TREAD. EVEN COLLEAGUES AT
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION PRIVATELY BELIEVE HIS
STORY ON RHODESIA WILL STRIKE SYMPATHETIC CHORD
AMONG BRITISH ELECTORATE.
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